RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

VOL. 14 NO. 6
2 MARCH 1984
ISSUE NO. 288

80¢

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- JANUARY RIDERSHIP
- URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT
- MIXED TRAIN OF THOUGHTS
- RAIL CANADA
- SCHEDULE CHANGES
- RAIL FANTRIPS

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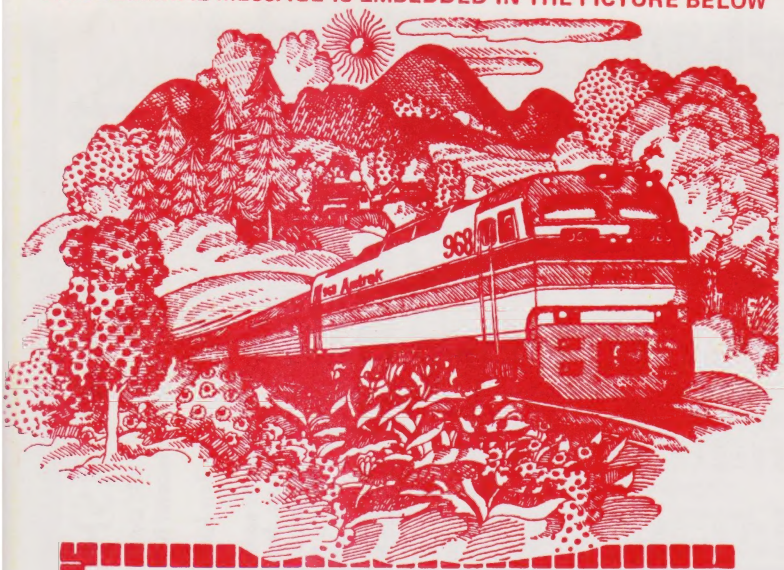

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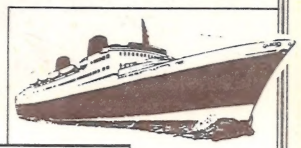

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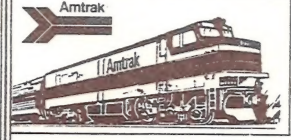

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BACK ISSUES

Many back issues of Rail Travel News are available. Recent year volumes can be ordered by the full volume at special prices. 1983 (24 issues) is $12. 1982 (22 issues) is $10. 1981 (21 issues) is $10. 1980 (18 issues) is $8. Single copies can be ordered at individual issue price.

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS
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BOOKS

"The Whistles Blow No More", subtitled "Railroad Logging in the Sierra Nevada 1874-1942", by Hank Johnston, has just been published by Trans-Anglo Books.

This book is a pictorial account of the glory days of flume and railroad logging in California's southern Sierra Nevada mountains. They lasted, intermittently, for just 68 seasons and involved only six operations, but they typified nearly everything that was exciting about steam logging out West.

It all started in 1874, when the California Lumber Co. began building its 52-mile V-flume from the mountains near present Oakhurst to Madera in the San Joaquin Valley. It ended in Nov 1942 when the last trainload of logs rolled to the mill pond of the Yosemite Sugar Pine Lumber Co. at Merced Falls.

The book contains 205 wonderful old photos, including dozens never before seen. The hardbound book is 8½x11, 160 pages, retail price $25.95. Includes locomotive rosters, endsheet map of entire area, dust jacket. Publisher is Interurban Press, P.O. Box 6444, Glendale CA 91205. (Include $1.10 post & hdlg is ordered by mail.)

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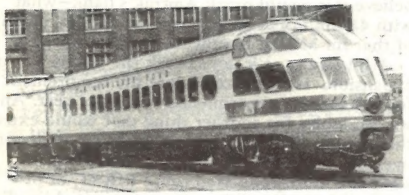
THE COVER STORY

The Twentieth Century Railroad Club, Chicago's 13-year old railfan organization, is running a car like that shown on our cover, a "Skytop" parlor-observation car from the Milwaukee Road's HIAWATHA, on upcoming fantrips—in addition to a full-length ex-Santa Fe dome.



The club on March 9 dedicated a 4200-square foot office, travel center, museum and members' lounge, its new "World Headquarters", at 509 W. Roosevelt in Chicago. After operating for 13 years out of makeshift offices in its members' homes and workplaces, it now occupies the fourth floor of the Soo Line Railroad Freight Terminal, several blocks south of Union Station in Chicago's rapidly-developing River City district.

The 80-year-old office-warehouse-loft complex overlooks the Amtrak coach yards where the club's popular excursion trains are serviced and coupled into Amtrak's regularly scheduled trains.

At the dedication, Vice President-Passenger Services F.K. Plous Jr. announced the club's 1984 excursion-train and private-car program. Destinations include "Tulip Time" in Holland, Michigan, the Illinois State Fair at Springfield, Wisconsin Dells, Greenfield Village, Galena/Dubuque and other attractions. Plous said the club also plans a repeat of 1983's successful steam-locomotive nostalgia rambles.

The club, founded by two South Side teenagers in 1971, now numbers over 1000 members and carries more than 10,000 persons per year on railroad tours and excursions. Introduced at the dedication was William Fahrenwald, the club's co-founder and new executive director. Fahrenwald and Operations Manager James Burd are the club's first full-time paid employees. Their work is supplemented by several hundred volunteer members who act as on-board "car hosts" during trips, supply the labor needed to complete the conversion of the old loft into a contemporary headquarters, and assist in day-to-day administration.

"Chicago has long needed a center for a variety of railroad-oriented activities," said Club Board Member Frank Malone. "World Headquarters is it. There's a members' lounge and museum for serious hobbyists. There's a growing collection of art and literature for youngsters and students who want to know more about trains. And there is a professional travel center for people who just want to take a good train trip."

The club is kicking off its spring travel season Mar 17-18 with two dome-car rambles to Dearborn, just outside Detroit. "As on our earlier excursions, the snacks, meals and cocktails will be served by club members working as Car Hosts," said Bill Fahrenwald. "They will wear their white jackets carrying the logo of the old TWENTIETH CENTURY LIMITED, and they'll be dispensing the kind of classic American lounge-car courtesy that most people think you can't get any more."

The private cars used for the service are No. 513, an ex-Santa Fe full-length dome lounge car, with 41 reclining seats and an 18-seat dining section upstairs, plus a kitchen and bar on the lower level. The second, called "Cedar Rapids", is a newly-rebuilt "Skytop" parlor-observation car like that on our cover. It has 24 swivel parlor armchairs forward and 12 lounge seats at the rear in a glass bubble observation lounge. The car has its own bar. The club will also operate a private-car trip Apr 28-29 featuring a choice of overnight stays at either St. Louis or Kansas City. The club will also operate trips upon request for clubs or organizations of 30 or more persons. The club's 24-hour hotline is (312) 829-4500. Visa and Mastercard are accepted.

LETTERS

I am a non-smoker. My travels include many train trips in Europe, U.S. and of course Canada, being a Canadian. Having traveled Amtrak several times, I have this problem: your Superliners allow smoking in several back rows. This smoke of course is carried thru the air-conditioning system and we have to breathe this. I find this problem with Amtrak sleepers. How nice and pleasant it would be to have a car for non-smokers and a car for smokers. I find European trains A-1 for rail comfort in this respect.

I used Amtrak last April to travel to Ft, Lauderdale to get a ship out of Port Evergaldes. Dining room service was good—no smoking allowed. Had a sleeper for two nights, Montreal to Washington, Washington to Ft. Lauderdale. I am tra-

veling from Los Angeles this coming June and am thinking of Amtrak to Chicago-Detroit-Windsor-Buffalo-Niagara Falls & Hamilton. Having traveled many times on cruise ships, I am so pleased to be able to embark on a first class ship with no-smoking rooms. I am looking forward to future changes in my rail travel in the U.S. I have several friends in the U.S. who are non-smokers also. They have the same problem—allergic to smoke.

Mrs. E. Baran
Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

Please lobby for Amtrak to have NO SMOKING in lounge cars or at least limited to a corner. Thank you for the work you do.

(Postcard signed by eight rail travelers from California)

In 1979 and 1971 the nation lost large numbers of long distance trains. The remaining rail passenger network was a skeleton without much political support and big annual operating defi=cits and small ridership. Considering everything and everyone that Amtrak had against it in the beginning and thruout its brief history, I'd say it's remarkable that we can even be quarreling about the restoration of full-service diners.

In the next few years I believe rail advocates must find out the cost of trying to restore needed long distance trains thruout the Amtrak system. There seems to be a real lack of public communication about specific facts and figures regarding the old trains and too much nostalgia. With accurate facts and figures on costs and ridership, I believe a sensible case can be made for restoring five long distance trains a year and to create new ones. These trains should have a trial period of a least three years with language within the budget appropriations bills calling for specific innovations if the trains are not immediately successful. Political realities also dictate that rail advocates should be proposing permanent tax measures to raise monies for Amtrak's existing capital and deficits needs. We have yet to have a President in the White House with a real rail fan or rail professional mind. Until we get one, I believe the thin ranks of all rail passenger advocates must work together for the common good.

Michael A. Cromer
Pasadena, California

Re James Neal's letter about the Amtrak board under the Amtrak law (RTN 287): He states that one member "must be a representative of freight shippers." The precise terminology is "a representative of business with an interest in rail transportation." There is a further qualification: That member must not "have any direct or indirect financial or employment relationship with any railroad" nor similarly compete with Amtrak "in the transportation of passengers."

Robert J. Swan
Long Beach, California

Our NARP hotline is telling us to write our Congressmen and ask them to force Amtrak tp provide service to Oklahoma. I couldn't agree more that Oklahoma should have daily service at once, but let's broaden the base so we'll have more of a chance at what would really help Oklahoma—an amendment to the Amtrak Law reading something like: "the largest city OR state capitol of each of the 48 adjacent states must have regular Amtrak service within a year." No 403-b—at least not for that first train. If Amtrak could argue that a train would not meet criteria, then the service would have to be provided using RDC-type equipment with a very lenient special criterion or no criterion at all. It's a little hard to believe this would break Amtrak's bank—what with 48 million or so left over for capital, much of that for MORE Northeast Corridor projects.

While we're at it, let's break the virtual ban on expansion. It's time to restore the requirement for at least one experimental route per year. And we can lobby for another thing that would expand the system—"between intermediate city pairs of over, say, 100,000 population, Amtrak must serve the most populated route FIRST, or provide an alternate service to the populated line." The experiences of Yakima WA and Wyoming tell us that Amtrak does reroutings on whim, will not correct mistakes (at least in the case of Washington State with the Seattle section of the EMPIRE BUILDER) and always tries to minimize or reduce service when it seeks to reroute.

You'll note that all of the above have the beneficial effect of removing Amtrak's Marketing and Operating Departments from routing and service decisions. They're forced to come up with constructive solutions, not automatic "no's". Amtrak is a bureaucracy and as such will provide as little service as it can get away with except in the NE Corridor. Mr. Claytor, if you'll remember, put the expansion ball in our court early on, saying if Congress would force it, he'd run more trains. (Note that the MULE extension affects the Doles' territory—you don't need over political pressure to get Amtrak to do constructive things—same for KANSAS City-Omaha.) THIS is what NARP should be doing to get service into Oklahoma and in the bargain make more trains available to more people without eating huge fleets of equipment. Oklahoma and alot of other deserving places are going to do without service for good unless this is done. But if the Oklahoma Congressional delegation can do something on its own—more power to them.

R. Shay
Auburn, Washington

Altho I am generally of the opinion that the blame for NARP's bias and ineffectualness belongs on the thoulders of the NARP board—the individuals upon whom the law places the business management of the corporation—I cannot deny that the directors are not entirely at fault.

A good case in point is your report (RTN 285) of the NARP Region 12 meeting, which, by the way, you incorrectly characterized as a "meeting of NARP," when in fact it was nothing more than a casual get-together of a few NARP members residing within Region 12. It is certainly symptomatic of the naivite and superficiality of the people who regularly attend these regional NARP farces, that the only actual association business taken up was the election of the new slate of directors from the region, which was done in a kind of "by-the-way" fashion and returned to the NARP board the faith-healers and snake-oil purveyors already sitting on it.

All this supports my view that NARP is regretably nothing more than what the "active" NARP members want it to be. Since there exists no practical and effective way to change the mind of the little NARP groups that, so to speak, call the shots, the only pragmatic remedy available to the small reform-minded element within the NARP ranks is to charter their own organization.

Alfred E. Ehm
San Antonio, Texas

There has been quite an extended discussion about things that have happened to Amtrak during the holiday season. If one will review what is seen on TV, you will very seldom note only good news—there is always criticism in general. I think all of us really want Amtrak to succeed, and it disturbs us that such things are allowed to happen.

For instance, in February I was on a return trip from Kansas City to Chicago on the SOUTH-WEST LIMITED. Unfortunately, there were no hamburgers for lunch nor any soup. A number of passengers as well as myself did not care for salami sandwiches as an alternative!

Amtrak appears to be experimenting with rental carts in Union Station—if one looks at the cart racks they see that there are always a number of them there and people just do not feel they should spend a dollar for the cart and then watch the porter or the red caps get a quarter back for returning the carts afterwards. Also, the carts are very close to the terminals, so that if you come in on a long distance train you have a long walk before you even have the opportunity to think about obtaining a cart.

In March I went from New York to Cleveland and then Cleveland to Chicago. Upon arriving in Cleveland at 7am the porter was nowhere to be found, and a number of us were not awakened and had to merely get dressed and rush off the train. The followint day getting on the LAKE SHORE LIMITED for Chicago, a different porter had failed to wake up all the passengers getting off in Cleveland. Occurrences like this leave nothing but a bad taste in first-time travelers on Amtrak.

It is difficult for me to see what benefit these new on-board Super-Supervisors do. The crews in general seem upset that these new wonders, not having much experience, are being paid $28,000 a year or so. Also, one is very suspicious when some of them get on the train intercom and announce that they are in charge of the entire train, etc.

William Stroh III
Short Hills, New Jersey

In my article in RTN 287 (WINNIPEG LIMITED) I stated that the Dakota Rail Passengers Association proposal for service between West Grand Forks ND and Winnipeg, Manitoba does NOT include thru cars from the EMPIRE BUILDER for a variety of reasons. I must clarify that statement. The Dakota Rail proposal does NOT state that there should not be thru cars to and from the EMPIRE BUILDER. On the contrary! Dakota Rail's position (as stated to me thru their Chief Executive Officer, James Larson) is that it would immeasurably benefit the WINNIPEG LIMITED if thru Chicago-Winnipeg equipment were carried on the EMPIRE BUILDER between Chicago, St. Paul and West Grand Forks. To encourage local traffic on the West Grand Forks-Winnipeg "stub", it may be possible that no reservations would be necessary locally between West Grand Forks and Winnipeg, but would be required for travel on the "thru" train (the connecting cars carried on the EMPIRE BUILDER) for travel beyond West Grand Forks. A similar situation exists on the MONTREALER, where reservations are necessary for travel outside the New York-Washington segment of the NE Corridor. The WINNIPEG LTD situation would be similar, but opposite of the MONTREALER.

I believe that thru cars CAN and SHOULD be an integral part of this proposal, should it come to fruition. There is, when you come right down to it, NOTHING that cannot be resolved, negotiated or just "taken care of" regarding thru car service between Chicago, St. Paul and Winnipeg. So let's end the "why-no-thru-cars?" question and get this train on the track—where it rightfully belongs!

S. Willis James III
Grand Forks, North Dakota

QUOTES OF THE WEEK ***

"Try to imagine a village that could offer you relaxation, magnificent beauty, great entertainment, quality shopping, a European flavor, good old American hospitality and great skiing. You've just imagined Lake Placid!"

—From the Amtrak Tours folder, "The Olympian" Ski Train Packages to Lake Placid and the Olympic Region.

(Try to imagine a great skiing village that shut down its only rail access line.)

SLIP OF THE MONTH CLUB ***

"Fix Amtrak: Amtrak's board of directors has approved plants to spend $5.5 million on rehabilitating track, bridges and signal systems in Connecticut, Massachusetts and New York."

—New Haven Register, March 1.

(Will they construct the bridges at these plants?)

"Richard Doherr's next California Mystery Train, the St. Patrick's Day Special, will leave Southern California the evening of March 16 heading for San Francisco. At almost the same instant, a rival tour, the Mystery Express, will leave the Amtrak station in Oakland heading for Santa Barbara."

—San Francisco Chronicle, March 2.

(The real mystery is how they depart at night.)

EAST COAST REPORT

By Theodore W. Scull

Metro-North riders who have eagerly awaited the arrival of the first batch of new M-3 commuter cars for the electrified portions of the Harlem and Hudson Lines appear to be in for a disappointment.

While the new equipment, built by the Budd Co. of Troy, Michigan, will help alleviate some of the standee problems, the inadequate electric power means the heavier cars will have about 30% less acceleration. The first 14 of the 142 cars, which entered service on Mar 12, will be assigned to protect the express and local-express schedules, as they require less stopping and starting than the locals.

Power from existing substations can be increased with a minimum amount of investment, but for the M-3 cars to achieve their full potential, entirely new substations are needed. The Long Island Rail Road, which has also ordered the new cars, has stronger power and is not experiencing the same problems. (For other LIRR problems with the M-3 cars, see Urban-Suburban Transit section.)

The Long Island continues to receive high marks for anticipating the traveling public's needs by scheduling 13 extra Babylon and Port Jefferson Branch trains for Saturday, Mar 17, date of the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade.

★★★

In the March issue of Travel & Leisure, writer Janet Nelson enumerated the many pleasures of visiting Cold Spring, an attractive Victorian town on the Hudson between Croton-Harmon and Poughkeepsie. However, in the "How and Where" sidebar, she mistakenly reported that Amtrak trains serve Cold Spring from Grand Central with a change at Croton-Harmon, repeating a similar error that appeared not so long ago in the New York Times travel section. It makes one wonder about the quality of research and editing that goes into the so-called premier travel publications.

★★★

RTN readers Andrea Banks, Anthony Perl and I took advantage of the relatively new NJ Transit/MTA schedule that allows day trippers to make a 174-mile Saturday round trip from Hoboken to Port Jervis for $13.

The 9:30am departure from Hoboken is a diesel-hauled push-pull train using Comet I coaches going as far as Suffern. En route, the towering garbage dumps and what's left of the swamps give way to old industrial Paterson, then suburbia, and finally some open country just before one makes the change to a single Budd car at the last stop, just inside New York State.

The MTA line follows Route 17 for some time, then heads off into the rolling farmland of Orange County, well away from any population centers. The ride includes a spectacular single-line trestle over Moodna Creek. New stations along the way are tiny boxes with huge parking lots used by New York-bound commuters on weekdays.

At Port Jervis, 2¾ hours later, the former Erie station is derelict and shuttered, and the city, once an important transportation center serving canal, railroad and highway traffic, has seen better days. During the 2½-hour layover we enjoyed a good home-style lunch at the Robin's Nest on the main street and walked across the Mid-Delaware Bridge into Pennsylvania. In the summer, by using the later return at 8:51, energetic hikers could explore the excellent trails that radiate from here. This day was very cold, and we were happy to climb back aboard the 2:46pm Budd car for Hoboken, with a change at Suffern.

Ridership was relatively light both ways, and on the return trip a large group of noisy but quite harmless partygoers boarded at Otisville, to spend the evening celebrating some more at the Clam Broth House in Hoboken. Quite sensibly, they chose the train rather than risk driving.

★★★

New York City subway news has been grim, to say the least, for the past two weeks. On Mar 6 vandals placed metal pieces on the tracks of the IND Line in Queens, and a late-night, 8-car Rockaway shuttle train derailed, fortunately causing no injuries to the 30 passengers. Two days later, two boys were arrested for trying to derail another IND train near the Sheepshead Bay station. The alert motorman stopped the train in time and cleared the tracks himself. An observant passenger spotted the two boys, aged 14 and 15, and transit police arrested them as they boarded the train laughing.

On Mar 3 a conductor was killed when he was trying to board his A train that suddenly lurched, causing him to fall between the cars. On the same day, a man killed himself when he jumped in front of a northbound IRT No. 2 train at Penn Station, and three days later at the next station south, an off-duty police officer shot and killed an armed man who was trying to rob him.

On Mar 7, subway doors on all eight cars of a RR train opened as the train was entering the BMT station at 57th Street. One radio station indicated that three passengers were thrown out of the train onto the platform, but there is absolutely no verification of that.

In a Mar 10 report, a higher water table is damaging some subway tunnels, the tracks and ties along seven route-miles of the system, even tho the TA is currently pumping out 13 million gallons of water daily.

Riders on the J and M Lines will have to find alternate routes during non-rush hours and on weekends for five months beginning at the end of March while the tracks on the 80-year-old Williamsburg Bridge are replaced. There is more, but the above is quite enough.

On the lighter side, a B train was delayed by one hour while following a lost German Shepherd dog that strayed onto the tracks and ambled ahead from 110th to West 4th Street, where it was rescued by the ASPCA and is now up for adoption.

★★★

The Amtrak engineer shot in the temple on Feb 21 while walking along the platform of Track 21 at Penn Station died of his wounds at Bellevue Hospital on Mar 10. He is the only one to die of the six people shot in the past year in the same neighborhood by the same gun. The coverup to the linking of the crimes has led to still more demotions in the police department, but there have been no arrests and very few clues in the case.

★★★

The Boston Globe devoted two full pages to explaining how to cope with the two-year reconstruction of the Southeast Expressway that reduces the overcrowded and crumbling highway from eight to six lanes. In a well-organized information chart, the paper outlined the alternative train, bus and boat schedules.

Additional trains will be operating into and out of South Station on the Shore and Framingham Lines and the Franklin and Stoughton Branches. While ridership on the lines into North Station has declined since the fire knocked out the bridge over the Charles River, the South Side stands a good chance of gaining some new, and hopefully permanent riders. Thanks to reader Barry Steinberg for answering the call for Boston transit information before the call went out.

Desert Rumors

BY MARK W. MEYER

I'd like to start the rumor that Amtrak is planning to stop the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR in Battle Mountain and Imlay, Nevada. Recently, while driving west along Interstate 80, I noticed that both those towns have gigantic billboards nearby with Amtrak advertisements. It's the same one on both billboards—a woman standing in front of a Superliner saying something like "I finally found a car roomy enough for my family of seven." "All Aboard Amtrak." Well, I think that's what they say, because I've seen them before, but these advertisements are so unsuited to billboard advertising, and the billboards are *so* far from the highway, few people can read them.

Of course, the CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR does stop in "nearby" Winnemucca, so maybe this is why these Amtrak billboard ads are situated as they are in the Nevada desert. So, let's say that you are in the practice of carrying a telescope in your car specifically for the purpose of examining billboards more closely, and, let's say that you are so taken with the ad that you decide to try out Amtrak. Since it is the biggest town in the immediate area, you figure Amtrak *must* stop in Winnemucca. The fun is just beginning.

(continued on page 19)

RAIL CANADA

A DOME CAR was introduced to the OCEAN on Mar 9, VIA Rail Canada said in a press release of that date. The above photo was released by VIA to accompany the announcement. The car is a Skyline dome snack-lounge car similar to those used on the CANADIAN. VIA said it is the first time that a dome car has been operated by the company in Atlantic Canada. "As an introductory step, one Skyline car is currently available on some runs of the eastern transcontinental service. In the next few weeks, more cars will be added to the service so that all transcontinental trains running between Halifax and Montreal will then be equipped with a dome car", VIA said.

ATLANTIC CANADA TRAVELERS also are being offered a new discount fare plan, effective Mar 19. Called the "GO FOR IT" fare, it offers a 60% discount on the regular roundtrip rail fare for trips originating in the Maritimes with destinations to all points between Quebec City and Windsor; the discount also applies in the opposite direction. Also reduced 60% are all Dayniter seats and sleeping car accommodations. The roundtrip fare is valid any day between Mar 19 and May 14, except Apr 19-23 inclusive, as long as the return trip is initiated on or before Jun 1. All reservations must be made and confirmed at least 7 days before departure and tickets must be purchased within 3 days after confirming reservations. As an example of the cost reduction, the regular Moncton-Montreal fare of $128 is reduced to $51.

CANADIAN TRANSPORT COMMISSION announced Mar 2 that it will hold an inquiry into the on-time performance of VIA Rail, focusing on all transcon, corridor and regional services during both peak and regular seasons. The investigation was prompted by passenger complaints and by a study by Transport 2000, which monitored VIA's performance during Christmas and New Year periods. Among the topics to be investigated is the extent to which new equipment could improve VIA's reliability. Appointed to conduct the inquiry are Dr. Ken Mozersky, Serge Pepin, and Michael Parry.

MASSIVE FREIGHT DERAILMENT Feb 14 closed the CN main line between Toronto and London for three days. Trains were detoured via Kitchener and Guelph, a single-track train-order line that was suddenly inundated with 22 more passenger trains and many freights (the line is near capacity with its regular service). On the

first day, Feb 15, delays of 4-6 hours were common. The INTERNATIONAL didn't arrive in Chicago until after 10pm. On Feb 16 operations ran more smoothly and delays were minimal, limited to the 30-50 minutes standard additional running time on the north line. The westbound INTERNATIONAL of that date (the first Amtrak train ever to use the Kitchener line) was delivered to GTW at Port Huron 82mins late, but made up nearly an hour into Chicago, showing the padding on GTW and Conrail and showing that it would be possible to run the INTERNATIONAL via the slower, longer, but more populous Kitchener line, which also serves Stratford, essentially on the present schedule. Consist of the westbound train Feb 15 was (Atk equipment) engine 249; cars 28305, 21219, 21176, 21169.

VIA RAIL TRAINS 43, 44, 45, 46, 48 and 49 will be rerouted between Ottawa and Smiths Falls from Mar 5-26 and from Apr 15-Jun 15 for line upgrading between Federal and Smiths Falls.

THE WHITE PASS and Yukon may reopen this year, depending on the reopening of the Cyrus Anvil zinc mine. The CTC prefers to reopen the railroad, while the company wants a $25 million upgrade of the highway between its operation and the Port of Skagway.

NO PLUM PUDDING was served this winter on Canadian trains, the first time in 25 years. At one time sales of this item reached 50,000 but recently it has dropped to 5,000 and the cost of making it has risen.

VICTORIA-COURTENAY DAYLINER patronage rose 12% in 1983, when the trains carried 45,700 passengers, compared to 40,700 in 1982. The two Budd cars on this run, nos. 6125 and 6134, will have food bars installed in them (car 6133 will replace the two as they leave for refitting). The CTC wants more advertising for this service, better station services, and food service. A new station might also be in the works, as the old CP roundhouse and yards could become a victim of urban planning. The roundhouse would remain, but the yard would become two tracks.

EDMONTON CORRESPONDENT Robert Rynerson's mother died unexpectedly earlier this month, a victim of a hit-run driver in Seattle, as she was walking to the King Street Amtrak Station to catch a train to Portland.

TRANSPORT 2000 QUEBEC has a new address as of Mar 5: 3467 Durocher St., Montreal, Que., H2X 2C6. Telephone (514) 844-4024 or 844-2062.

NEW WINNIPEG-EDMONTON train service may be named the PANORAMA, according to a VIA staff rumor.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

THE BALTIMORE METRO is carrying an average of about 21,000 riders a day, according to an early March report, and between opening day last Nov 21 and Jan 31 it made $600,000, or 35% of its operating costs—ahead of the 25% forecast. Officials expect ridership to increase to 25,000 daily by mid-May and to continue increasing after bus routes feeding the system are re-arranged in June.

LONG ISLAND RAIL ROAD was to have 26 Budd-built M-3 cars delivered by the end of March, but they won't be arriving, because a problem cropped up in test of the new cars: the cars' shoes do not make proper contact with the third rail, causing the shoes fo pull away from the rail on turns. In the Mar 13 announcement of the problem, transit officials indicated they would work with Budd to try to determine the cause and solution to the difficulty.

MONTREAL-ST HILAIRE TRAIN will be continued for two more years, thanks to the personal intervention of Transport Minister Michel Clair. The Quebec Ministry of Transport and the Intermunicipal Transport Council agreed to megotiate the terms of train-bus service. The Government of Quebec, determined to retain the service, will pay $1.3-1.5 million per year to Canadian National.

CHICAGO'S RTA RECOMMENDED early this month that 14 commuter stations with light use be closed to reduce costs. The stations have average daily boardings of 50 or less, compared with the average of 492 among all stations. Seventeen other stations would have ticket agents removed. (continued on page 19)

Texas News and a Comment

BY A. O. SINGLETON

Have you noticed how many reports of "developments" related to Amtrak operations in Texas there have been in the last few months?

We discover:

1. The SUNSET LIMITED is among the "weakest" of Amtrak's operations.
2. Things are so bleak for this train that even with a World's Fair at the east end of the line and a Summer Olympics at the west end of the line, traffic potential increases would not justify more than the usual tri-weekly frequency of service...

Let me interrupt this news summary for the trivia quiz.

1. How many trains managed by Amtrak (living and dead) in its 13+ year history have never operated on a daily basis?

A. Five

B. One

C. None—Amtrak always gives even the most hopeless routes at least a short trial on a daily frequency.

The answer is B.

2. If you guessed the right answer, guess the name of the train.

3. What would it take to justify daily operation of the above train?

A. A World's Fair on the east end of the route

B. An Olympic Games on the west end of the route

C. A World's Fair and an Olympics on both ends of the route

D. An Act of Congress

E. An act of God

F. None of the above (or anything else you could come up with)...

Back to the news from Texas:

3. In early February, Amtrak ran a test train from Houston to Dallas and rediscovered that you can't run a train between the two largest cities in Texas unless you can come up with money to rebuild 250 miles of track. (Actually that sentence is not completely true.) Many people persist in saying that the last Houston-Dallas train was the 1966 model SAM HOUSTON ZEPHYR with its slightly over 4-hour schedule. (This is also not true.) Amtrak's Houston-Dallas INTER-AMERICAN of 1979 made the trip three times a week on a route *slightly* to west of the beeline between the two cities. During the time the train ran, I challenged four friends to a race from Houston to Dallas. I took the train and came in third! The guy who won took the plane on a 55-min flight. The guy who drove required only about a half hour longer than the old ZEPHYR would have taken but since it wasn't in the race, he came in second. My train was supposed to take nine hours, but it was late; nonetheless, I beat the guy on the bicycle and he finished before the guy in the rowboat.

4. After extensive and intensive study, Amtrak found that the old LONE STAR was killed off by mistake and as a result the people of Oklahoma have been elevated from third class citizens to second class citizens. (A third class citizen is left trainless, a second class citizen gets a train if he is willing to pay more than everyone else for the honor, and us first class citizens get our trains at no extra charge. Simple. Why didn't they use this logic to construct the Interstate Highway System?

I apologize for presenting the above late news in the manner I did, but doing so kept me from beating my head against the wall. The remaining events can be presented in a straight-forward manner.

5. Amtrak ran another test train in February and found the rails connecting Fort Worth and El Paso are fine for running passenger trains.

6. The legal barrier to running a passenger train in excess of 20mph in the vast area (and I mean *vast area*) around Dallas has been lifted and speed is limited only by track condition and the will of the MoPac.

7. Finally, (this is not Texas news, but I don't want to be totally local) the plan of Mr. Bill Wullenjohn (a man I presume has not received one dime of taxpayers' money) will soon be realized. Mr. Wullenjohn will have restored Kansas City-New Orleans service and St. Louis-New Orleans service, made the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS a much stronger train, converted the MULES into much more than intrastate locals, and he just may have started the kind of thinking that will lead to such unbelieveable options as New Orleans-Denver and Kansas City-Portland. Wullenjohn's genius is that he came up with a plan that does all these things and Amtrak management couldn't reject it for the usual reasons of equipment shortages, high capital costs, excessive additional rail miles, etc.

Gee, if Amtrak heard Mr. Wullenjohn, they might hear me. How's this for the attention-getter?:

KILL THE SUNSET LIMITED NOW AND SAVE THE MONEY YOU'RE GOING TO WASTE ON IT UNTIL THE NEXT BUDGET SQUEEZE (WHEN IT WILL BE KILLED OFF ANYWAY).

FORGET THE TEXAS TRIANGLE—IT WILL NEVER BE DEVELOPED BY A CAPITAL-POOR CORPORATION LIKE AMTRAK. SLOW SPEEDS, ROUNDABOUT ROUTES, AND LESS THAN MULTIPLE FREQUENCIES WILL ONLY CREATE MORE NEGATIVE PUBLIC IMAGES OF PASSENGER TRAINS AND THEIR USEFULNESS.

Please consider the following positive suggestions of other "Wullenjohns" who don't want Texas to be the next Wyoming on the Amtrak map:

1. Bring the CRESCENT to Texas. It would be easy to make Houston early each morning and be in San Antonio by noon. Get the consist headed east by 6pm, back thru Houston about 10:00 and arrive in New Orleans in time to resume the current schedule to Atlanta and points east. The results would include: people living in two of the ten largest cities in the country (Houston and San Antonio) could go direct or make viable connections to places like Atlanta, the Northeast, Chicago and beyond. Keep the CRESCENT extension daily and compete for some "head-end" business in package express and mail.

2. Before you give the EAGLE another trial as a daily, let the customers know about it.

3. Split the EAGLE at Longview and have a good Dallas-St. Louis train and a good San Antonio-Austin-St. Louis train instead of a good Dallas-St. Louis train and a slow roundabout excursion train for the balance of the route. (Somebody is saying, "You are throwing out the west side of the Texas Triangle. The San Antonio-Dallas market is going down the drain.") Real rail service between Dallas and San Antonio went down the drain in 1964 just as it went down the drain between Houston and Dallas in 1966. Amtrak has had a decade to find a way to get operating on the essential Dallas-Temple segment (MKT). When and if this happens, split the train at Dallas instead of Longview. In the meantime, use a dedicated Ambus to cover the west side of the Triangle and to feed the now more efficient CRESCENT and EAGLE.

4. Since you no longer have the SUNSET to worry about, how about a new train that connects in Dallas with the EAGLE during the day? You wouldn't even have to use thru cars if you could only afford switching at Longview. The new train would use that good MoPac track right to El Paso. It wouldn't stop long there, but would continue west to serve what has been the strongest part of the former SUNSET route. It would be a shame that we couldn't honestly call this Dallas-El Paso-Tucson-Phoenix-Los Angeles train the SUNSET LIMITED because it will have lost many of its limited aspects. It will no longer offer limited connections, limited convenience, limited speed and limited reasons for continued existence.

5. If someday the LONE STAR returns and the MKT Dallas-San Antonio line happened to be available—if Mexico brought the AZTEC EAGLE to San Antonio—who knows?

MOVING TO TEXAS? Or moving from Texas? Or anywhere else? Don't forget to send RTN your change of address before you do so. Don't rely on the Postal Service to forward your mail!

Notes From Many Trips

LAKE SHORE LIMITED

"The crew on this train was very friendly and helpful. We all had a great time in the car. Track condition was very rough, but the crew really made it bearable. My seat's foot rest would not work, so that made my sleep impossible. Food was o.k., but when I asked for an order of toast, I was told 'No, you must order only what's there on the menu!' That I think could be and should be changed." Jacquie Collins, Bedford Hills NY (first-time train rider).

CARDINAL

"This was the most nearly perfect trip I've ever had on Amtrak. The CARDINAL has come a long way in four years. If this train had a full dining car, I would rate it with the pre-Amtrak GEORGE WASHINGTON." Stephen Todesco, Roslindale MA.

EAGLE

"Routing of the train is a disaster, yet people seem to be riding it in spite of the train spending all day wandering around the state of Texas, and the tri-weekly schedule. We spent hours getting from Dallas to Austin, with innumerable delays on the MP between Dallas and Ft. Worth, and on the Santa Fe south of Ft. Worth (we followed a loaded coal train much of the way). Poor dispatching on the MP in Texas was noted. Lost over 30mins between Dallas and Ft. Worth because one track was out of service for track work and the other was blocked by a local whose crew had gone to lunch and left the train on the remaining line! MP dispatcher had to have another freight which was also waiting in the siding nearby flag back to get the itinerant local's crew out of the cafe to clear the line." (Rolland Graham, Mission Viejo CA).

"The sleeping car porter, Mr. Newman, was one of the most pleasant and helpful I have encountered in many years."(C.A. Wright, Austin TX).

COAST STARLIGHT

"SP track between Los Angeles and San Jose is bad! There are places where the cars bounce so badly up and down and sideways that at 60mph one has to hang on to something in order to walk." (Ronald Dirksen, Los Angeles CA).

"This train deserves the many accolades it has received. I had known from my reading that the trip along the California coast from Ventura to San Luis Obispo would be spectacular, but I was not prepared for the beautiful descent from Cascade Summit to Eugene." ((C.A. Wright, Austin TX).

"Train detoured over Feather River line and to Klamath Falls via Bieber. In spite of the slower travel, I was very excited at the opportunity to see this route." (George Burton, Humboldt, Sask., Canada).

"Best dining car crew of whole trip. Best organized and most helpful of all." (Hans Mueller, Bellevue WA).

CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR

"In spite of the protests appearing in RTN from BN proponents in Iowa, this train MUST be re-routed to a line with decent track conditions. The condition of the BN track is a complete farce for modern passenger service, particularly between Denver and Omaha I don't think BN crews know how to surface track thru switches and over highway crossings. Walking on the train is a hazard, with passengers thrown one way, then the other as the train bounces across the prairie. Strong lateral jarring is common, reminiscent of the old pre-Conrail Penn Central track in Indiana, due to poor track condition. Due to high passenger loadings,the dining car staff was completely inadequate. Dining crew was unable to accommodate the demand for meals; morale was poor; and the trainchief offered only excuses, saying that a second dining car was needed(which I doubt if they would staff the existing one properly and use the entire 72 seats simultaneously." (Rolland Graham).

"D&RGW track was almost perfect at 75mph. In some places one could stand q quarter on end on a table and it would stay there at 70mph. The D&RGW track even beats Santa Fe and UP for ride quality." (Ronald Dirksen.)

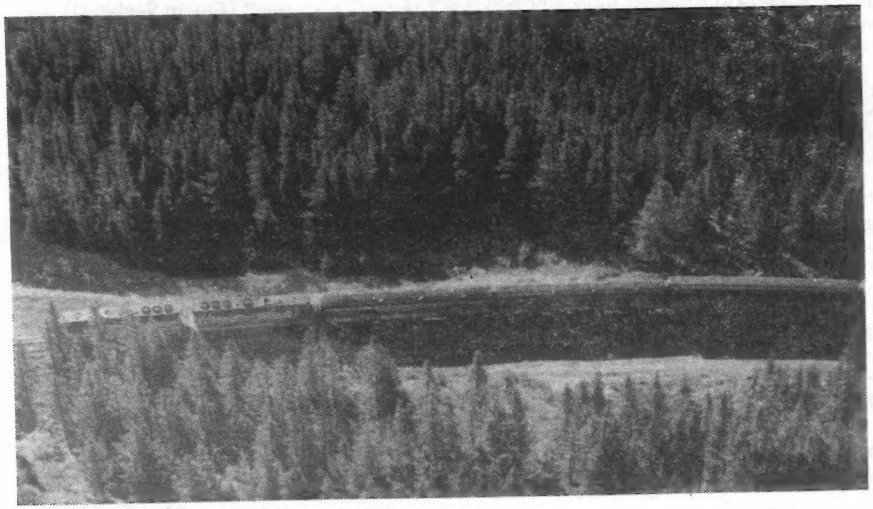
"SP train crews very helpful and informative. Many announcements of points of interest. Seems these crews took pains to dispell the usual SP image." (Hans Mueller).

"Good sleeper porter but abominal dining crew—one hour wait for lunch due to 'who cares' attitude." (Jack Turner, Tallahassee FL).

SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA

"Had 84-seat Amcoach with plastic armrest between seats, no leg rests. Air conditioning blasted away with frigid drafts all night. Ceiling lights shown into face all night. Sleep was impossible. Coach was

COMMENTS FROM RTN'S LAST READER TRAIN RATING SURVEY



The EMPIRE BUILDER received high marks in our most recent survey. Here the train is seen running thru Glacier Park. Amtrak photo.

sold out—no empty seats at times. Most miserable night I have ever had on Amtrak" (Ralph E. James, San Luis Obispo CA).

"Track condition on SP was very poor, especially between L.A. and Oxnard. The SPIRIT would be much nicer using Superliner equipment." (Stephen A. Ferrari, San Jose CA).

NIGHT OWL

"The porter did nothing on his own—strictly along for the ride. There were no dining facilities. Sleeper passengers stand in line for sandwiches just like everyone else." (Joe Gardner, Reston VA).

"Lights were not turned off during the bulk of sleeping hours, and pillows were not provided. Comfortable reclining seats partially compensated.. I find it hard to imagine such contrary actions on a train where virtually 100% of coach passengers desire sleep." (Ralph E. James, San Luis Obispo).

ADIRONDACK

"I've used this train 4 or 5 times a year ever since Amtrak launched it. It has always been very late at Fort Edward and it was late at Grand Central on my latest trip. I missed my connection to Philadelphia. I've heard all the excuses about very late arrivals from and to New York at Ft. Edward. This serious problem drives a lot of business away from this otherwise attractive train—not only there but also from other stations north of Schenectady." (Elwyn Seelye II, Rosemont PA).

"Operating crew green as grass; acted as if they had never been that way before. Failed to call out most stations; were confused as to which doors to open; at times jabbered away on P.A. to the passengers and to each other. D&H roadbed ROUGH, worse than the RF&P." (Edwin Harrington, Carversville PA).

EMPIRE BUILDER

"This was my most enjoyable ride. The only problem encountered was from Minot ND to Fargo. The track was so rough I could not sleep. From Fargo, I was either too tired to notice or the track improved as we headed to St. Paul." (Astor Kinney, Greensboro NC).

"An example of how Amtrak should operate its trains. Crew very friendly, extremely helpful porter, passengers kept informed of sights, schedule and services. Dinner reservations pulled off with a hitch" (Jack Turner, Tallahassee FL).

CANADIAN

"Most scenic route in North America, an elongated Rio Grande—18 cars, Vistadomes, observation lounge, real diner, and sections—a flashback to the old (real) CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR" (Jack Turner).

"Train 2 did not have a Park series dome. An ex-CN diner substituted. A dome was added at Winnipeg. There seems to be a shortage of operable domes in the WEst, with air conditioning and brake

problems seeming rampant" (Tom Higgins, E. Brunswick NJ).

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR

"Why does Amtrak spend billions for 120mph running in some sections and still have a 52mph average? Selected improvements in operating conditions (New Haven -New York) and track (Baltimore tunnel) could easily increase average speed to about 70mph. Connection with Grehound buses to Maine at South Station have deteriorated badly in the past two years."(Joe Gardner, Reston VA).

"Track condition between New York & Stamford is so bad that eating an otherwise good meal is dangerous to the stomach. I really hate to say it, but the NE Corridor ride is still too uncomfortable—certainly not a $2 billion improvement. There are periodic violent lurchings, even on rebuilt stretches, especially in Maryland and south of Philadelphia" (Forrest Haun, Somerville NJ).

"Metroliner service timekeeping was absolutely flawless. Despite many track-work-related slow orders, we were able to keep to our 2hr, 59min schedule with no problem" (Glenn Lunden, Princeton NJ).

"Train 168 was right on its good schedule thruout the entire Phila-Boston trip. Thirtieth Street Station in Philadelphia rates an 8, but South Station, Boston, rates a 4 in my opinion. I know that they are 'going to' fix it up. I've heard that for years. When? If you are carrying a heavy bag, it's a rough trip and a long one from Amtrak trains to the street. The station is dingy and dark. It makes Paul Revere shirl in his grave" (Elwyn Seelye II).

GENERAL COMMENTS

"Amtrak has made a lot of improvements, but I feel the food offered could still be improved. Having traveled coast to coast the last three years, I would like to see Amtrak make available showers either on the train or at certain stops on the long runs" (Astor Kinney).

"The 'improved' fare in the dining cars is certainly a step up from the cardboard food of the recent past, but lack of variety in menu selections, particularly on long trips, is painfully evident... Meal service is not as prompt as it should be... Overall, recent trips have indicated a more uniform level of service on the trains, which is an improvement. Gone also is the wide range of equipment conditions—most everything seemed to work reasonably well on recent trips. Cars were not spotless, but passably clean, tho the carpet in the Superliner sleepers is showing its age... One gripe heard repeatedly is the lack of non-smoking lounge space. The Superliner lounge ventilation system is poor; the car is usually very smoky and smells offensive" (Rolland Graham).

HIGHLIGHTS OF A 15,400-MILE RAIL TRIP TAKEN IN MAY & JUNE, 1983

SUNSET LIMITED: Equipment did not get to the station until it was time to leave in Los Angeles so, of course, we left late.

INTERNATIONAL & MAPLE LEAF: Would be better with long-distance instead of short-distance Amfleet cars.

OCEAN: Mean porter, rubber pancakes, dry eggs eastbound.

HUDSON BAY: It would be nice if it had a Dayniter coach. Track, naturally, is rougher the farther north it goes. No electrical outlets worked in the restrooms in the coaches.

LYNN LAKE MIXED TRAIN: What other crew serves caboose-made cheeseburgers (and donuts in plastic bread wrappers!) to your seat, announces 'Los Angeles' for Lynn Lake in Manitoba, and visits with passengers between dashings out to pick up a passenger carrying a canoe or helping switch out freight cars? Car was sort of clean at first.

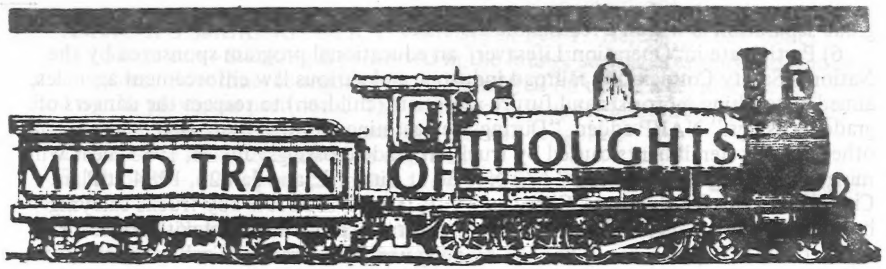
BRITISH COLUMBIA RAILWAY: Very enjoyable even if the catering crew ran out of water (so had to serve dinner by melting ice supply) just before we had to stop for four hours behind a freight that derailed one wheel. Crew wisely did not let anyone off because we were perched on the side of a cliff 2700 feet above the Fraser River for those four hours. Arrived at North Vancouver at 12:30am.

CANADIAN: Subway leading to train in Regina, Sask., depot should be filled in before it collapses. We had to walk thru piles of paint and plaster from ceiling and walls. Worst ever seen!

COAST STARLIGHT: Conductor let us extend ticket to Sacramento (instead of taking bus from Klamath Falls to our regular stop of Chico) so we got to detour via Bieber, Keddie, and Oroville. It was a full moon night (with an eclipse, yet!) so saw most things before it got light around Keddie. SP engine crew sat ahead of us in coach from Bieber to Marysville until it was their turn to run the train just between Marysville and Roseville.

—LE VERNE CAGE, PARADISE CA.

(The above survey covered the period Apr 24-Oct 29, 1983. See RTN 283.)



THE EMPIRE BUILDER, the westbound train that left Chicago Mar 14, derailed the next day at Bainville MT, just over the North Dakota border, after a collision with a loaded gravel truck. First reports were that the truck had struck the train in the side of the baggage car, but it was later determined that the truck was crossing the track at the time of impact, so that the train hit it between the truck's cab and trailer sections. Part of the truck trailer flew up and struck the baggage car of the 2-engine, 9-car train, putting a hole in it. The truck driver was killed, but there were no fatalities on the train. Of the approximately 140 passengers aboard, 52 were sent to hospitals and 24 admitted. Ten of those remained there the next day before being released. Amtrak said that there were no serious injuries. Newspaper reports told of observers marveling that the passenger cars held up so well in the wreck, with none of them crumpling as they struck the ground, and window material cracking but not shattering. One passenger was quoted as saying that his first thought was that he was glad he was not on an airplane. The first four cars behind the baggage car went over on their sides: the transition dorm car, two coaches and the diner. The last four cars remained upright. The lead engine reportedly did not derail. The consist of the derailed train was: engines 368 and 373; cars 1238, 39937, 31004, 34086, 38016, (Portland section:) 33007, 31017, 32013, (Seattle sleeper:) 32067. Estimated damage to the train was $1,525,000, with $85,000 damage to the track. The train was traveling at the 79mph speed limit at the time of the accident. A local observer said that there is not much traffic at the crossing, but there have been many gravel trucks there recently because of a nearby construction project. The eastbound train that left Seattle Mar 14 was turned at Wolf Point MT and picked up passengers from the derailed train. It was due into Seattle 6-8 hours late on the normal schedule of train 7. Train 8 was not completely turned, but the engines were shifted to the rear, and the cars were run in reverse. The consist of that train thus was: engines 305 and 362; cars 32008, 32062, 31018, 33018, 38009, 34038, 39923, and 1233. Passengers from train 8 were bused to Minneapolis/St. Paul, where they were placed on a makeup train 8. TV films of the wrecked train shown in the Northwest pictured jacknifed cars spread helter-skelter around the scene. There was a gap in the train behind the baggage car.....

★★★

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of Railroad Passengers on Mar 16, following the EMPIRE BUILDER wreck, called for local and state governments to protect trains from highway vehicles, and particularly from trucks. There have been four other accidents in the past nine months in which Amtrak passengers have been injured by trucks colliding with trains. NARP asked states and cities to do the following:

"1) Strictly enforce traffic laws forbidding motorists from violating crossing lights and gates. Ignoring a crossing signal should be deemed as serious an offense as running a red traffic light. As many as *half* of annual U.S. grade crossing mishaps occur at crossings with signal protection.

2) Eliminate (close) all grade crossings which are not essential.

3) Seek federal highway funds from the 1982 Surface Transportation Assistance Act to build grade separations (overpasses/underpasses) to replace crossings having heavy traffic volumes.

4) Fund improved signal protection for those crossings not eliminated thru closure or separation.

5) Ban commercial trucks from grade crossings wherever an alternate route with a

grade separation is within a reasonable distance.

6) Participate in 'Operation Lifesaver,' an educational program sponsored by the National Safety Council, the railroad industry, and various law enforcement agencies, aimed at teaching motorists and future motorists (children) to respect the dangers of grade crossings." NARP added, "During the past nine months, there ahve been four other Amtrak derailments caused by trucks at grade crossings: Jul 28, 1983, near Wilmington IL; Aug 25 at Rowland NC; Nov 30 at Citra FL; and Jan 24, 1984 at Plant City FL. In the Rowland and Citra accidents, trains struck low-boy trucks carrying heavy road machinery; in Plant City, the train struck a truck loaded with concrete septic tanks which was occupying the crossing waiting in traffic. Each collision sent railroad passengers and crews to the hospital, altho, *owing to the extraordinary safety characteristics of trains, no one aboard any of the trains was killed.* The accidents have caused millions of dollars in equipment and track damage, and have disabled a number of train cars at a time when Amtrak's equipment fleet is already seriously constrained. Areas visited by the 'Operation Lifesaver' campaign have reported a marked decline in crossing mishaps, and in central Florida, where Amtrak, Seaboard System Railroad, and the state have jointly funded a program to upgrade some crossings and close others, there has likewise been a substantial reduction in accidents".....

★★★

THE DEL MONTE must have a source of local funding assured before Caltrans will recommend that state funds for it be included in the state budget, according to a draft of the Caltrans 1984-89 Rail Passenger development Plan. The San Francisco to Monterey service would also need an operational agreement with the SP. Supporters of the train believe that these requirements could be met by Jun 30, the deadline for the state's 1984-5 fiscal year budget. Other sources estimate a year to meet the requirements. The California Transportation Commission, which has approved the draft of the Caltrans Development Plan, at its Feb meeting also agreed that no new rail passenger service should be funded in California until the three existing state-funded services are meeting the criterion of 55% of operating costs covered from the fare box. Currently, only the SAN DIEGANS meet that criterion, but the SAN JOAQUINS are very close to meeting it. The third service is the San Francisco Peninsula commute line.....

★★★

HIGH SPEED RAIL ASSOCIATION and the Interstate High Speed Rail Compact are presenting the First International High Speed Rail Convnetion in Philadelphia May 16-18. The convention will include talks by representatives of the DOT, Amtrak, labor unions, Canadians and academics on their views of high-speed rail. Included will be a tour of the Lindenwold line. Registration fee for the conference is $300 before Apr 18 (for non-members of HSRA; $200 for members). The address is Pennsylvania High Speed Intercity Rail Passenger Commission, House Box 240, Main Capitol Bldg., Harrisburg PA 17120.....

NATIONAL RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY will hold its 1984 Convention Aug 29 thru Sep 3 in Cincinnati OH, hosted by the Cincinnati Chapter, and headquartered at the Clarion Hotel. Plans are to operate six mainline excursion trains, including two pre-convention trips, each trip on a different route. The five steam-powered excursions will use NKP 2-8-4 no. 765, N&W 4-8-4 no. 611, and SR 2-8-2 no. 4501. The program will also feature charter operations on the Whitewater Valley RR and the Dayton trolleybus system, as well as visits to local rail facilities and historic sites. Further information will appear in RTN as it is released.....

THE SAN JOAQUINS will continue to be funded by the state of California, according to a Mar 20 announcement from Gov. Deukmejian. The trains reportedly reached 62% of costs covered by farebox revenues during the Jul-Dec period, above the 55% required by the state. Ridership between Jul and Jan was said to be up 30% from that of the previous year, and it was attributed to advertising and aspecial fare promotion (roundtrip for one-way plus $7).....

AMTRAK'S SMOKING POLICY was changed Feb 1. Here is the new policy:

1) Lounge cars—Smoking is permitted in the lounge seating area only, no smoking at the tables. Superliner lounge—smoking permitted on upper level on each end separated by the plexiglass partitions. The middle of the upper level lounge is reserved for no smoking. The lower level, no smoking allowed at tables.

2) Cafe—No smoking allowed in entire car.

3) Club cars—(all types)—Smoking allowed in rear three rows; no smoking in each section.

4) Dinette—Smoking in lounge seating only. No smoking permitted at tables.

5) Sleeping cars—Smoking permitted in private accommodations.

6) Dome coaches—No smoking except in restroom area.

7) Diner—No smoking allowed in entire car.

8) Coaches—Smoking only in coaches designated or in sections of coaches designated for that purpose.

On all trains, either long or short distance, one out of four coach cars will be designated as a smoking car. In the case of trains with less than four coach cars, a portion of a coach will be assigned as the smoking area. This will be determined by applying a one-to-four ratio to total available seating capacity.

The best judgment of the Chief, On-Board Services, and/or Conductor shall prevail when adjustments must be made, and the primary concerns are efficient loading procedures and for non-smokers to avoid smoking areas to the extent possible.

Pipes and cigars are prohibited except in private sleeping accommodations.....

★★★

CAN ANYONE TOP THIS? asks Robert Clark, as he submits the consist of train 81 at Winter Park FL on Mar 7, the first southbound NY-Florida train following the SILVER STAR derailment of Mar 5: engines 387, 389, 279, 386, 382 (only engine 387 to Tampa); cars (to Miami:) 25069, 21218, 21249, 21070, 3114, 2888, 1232, 1626, 25056, 25015, 25042, 28002, 2093, 2436, 8528, (to Tampa:) 2475, 28015, 25072, 25014. With five locomotives and 19 cars, the train was running 1½ hours late. On Mar 4, train 91 ran 13 cars behind only one F40 locomotive to Miami.....

WEST PALM BEACH Amtrak station is to be redeveloped into a combination restaurant and railroad museum, with work beginning whenever Amtrak starts building a new station just south of the present building, which was fumigated Mar 12. The station was purchase in December by a group of investors calling themselves the Orange Blossom investors. They own several Amtrak passenger cars also, and plan to run them in excursions , with the first one scheduled to run to Miami in late May. A diesel locomotive from the 1940s will be used at first, but a steam engine will eventually be used. The cars are a coach, a diner and a sleeper. The station is 59 years old.....

★★★

THE CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR, train 5, was reportedly blocked by a slide in the Rockies on Mar 15, and one reprot said that the slide had broken a lounge window.....

THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN is said to be re-evaluating its freight operation pattern in Washington State over the next 60 days, and will decide whether to re-open the Snoqualmie Pass route. Observers expect the decision will be positive, pointing to congestion on the ex-Great Northern line now in use, and high freight helper costs.....

AN AMTRAK MAN has been sent to Seattle to study the grade-crossing situation there after WashARP wrote to Amtrak President Claytor about the speed limit problem in the Seattle area.....

THE WESTERN RAILROADER and Western Railfan magazine, published in San Mateo CA, has temporarily suspended publication pending doctor's orders after Editor Francis A. Guido suffered a heart attack in November. Mr. Guido said that issues 509 and 510 have been printed and partially mailed.....

BAN ON SMOKING on short airline flights was being considered by the CAB, but on Mar 19 the agency ruled that such a ban was "impractical and administratively burdensome to airlines." But it did ban cigar and pipe smoking on all commercial aircraft, and banned smoking on planes that carry 30 or fewer passengers.....

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the station location *with* the toll-free number in telephone directories.) The UP (ex-WP) station is easy to find in Winnemucca–but that's not where Amtrak stops–and few people probably are aware there *are* two railroads in Winnemucca. And, since the SP/Amtrak station is such an unimposing structure it blends in perfectly with surrounding warehouses, especially around 4:30am and 9:20pm, when the daily CALIFORNIA ZEPHYRS are due.

If you find the station in Winnemucca, you'll notice no arrival/departure information. There is no waiting room open, and the toll-free Amtrak reservations telephone number isn't even given so you can call Amtrak to find out what's going on. The UP crew to handle train 6 east gets to wait for the train in the SP freight agent's office–but there is no evidence that this is available for passengers. In short, this experience is hardly what you'd expect from an outfit that can afford such big billboard ads on I-80.

On another topic, I have noticed that Amtrak has been advertising its "All-Aboard America" fares on radio stations in Havre and Great Falls MT. In the second week of March of this year, I listened to Amtrak ads boasting that "Amtrak's *new fall* All-Aboard America fares are here" (March is fall?) "Good for travel until March 31, and buy your tickets by February 29. (Hard to do on March 7) You must buy your tickets at least five days before traveling" (I thought this stipulation was cancelled) Doesn't Amtrak ever update these commercials?

So, shame on all of you who claim that Amtrak and its marvelous marketing moguls aren't doing their jobs. For those of you in Cut Bank and Hamlet who can no longer check baggage and obtain local train information and for those of you in Oklahoma who still have no train in spite of Mr. Claytor's "bending over backward" to help you out, and for those of you in Clearwater and St. Petersburg who now have another bus line in town–Amtrak, that is–for all that have been Amshafted, take heart! In Amtrak's Marketing Department, at least, your tax dollars are being well spent!

RAIL FANTRIPS

Apr 21: Huntsville AL-Chattanooga TN RT, visit Chattanooga Choo-Choo (redeveloped station). 16 coaches, obs Lookout Mountain, SR FP7 diesels, railfan amenities. No alcohol. $33 (by 4/14 for mail). North Alabama RR Club, Inc., PO Box 4163, Huntsville AL 35815.

Apr 28-May 5: Canada East tour; May 10-20: Canada West tour. East $670,west $750. America By Rail, 16168 Center Road, East Lansing MI 48823. (517) 339-8854.

Apr 29: Spring steam/diesel excursion on New Hope Steam Rwy. Newly rebuilt steam loco 40 (2-8-0) & open-window ex-Reading coaches lv New Hope PA 10:30am, ar Warminster sta 1pm. Return with diesel. Delaware Valley Chap, NRHS, Box 1179, Morrisville PA 19067. $15.

Jun 9 & 10: 1-day excursions from Detroit-Windsor on rare C&O Canadian rails. 6/9 Royal Canadian to St. Thomas, Ont. 6/10 Bluewater Ltd to Sarnia, Ont. Bluewater Michigan Chapter, NRHS, PO Box 296E, Royal Oak MI 48068. (313) 399-7963.

Jun 24: Newark NJ-Harrisburg via ex-LV main line, ex-Reading main line, E.PA Br & Reading Belt Line, & ex-PRR main line, Trenton Cutoff & Enola Br. Lv Newark 8:30am, back 8:30pm. $40. Tri-State Rwy Historical Soc., PO Box 2243, Clifton NJ 07015.

Jul 28 & 29: N&W 4-8-4 611 will power 2 1-day excursions from Detroit over ex-Wabash betw Detroit & Ft. Wayne IN, stopping in Montpelier OH. Bluewater Michigan Cahpter, NRHS, PO Box 296E, Royal Oak MI 48068. (313) 399-7963.

Send large SASE when responding to listings. One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

Keep up with news about the Empire Builder, the North Star, 403(b) service and general coverage. Minnesota Rail Passenger News, 6/year for $5.00 from: MinnARP (RTN), Box 375, Minneapolis MN 55440-0375.

"Issues in American Rail Travel," RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & post. Full details given later in RTN. PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads cost just $1 per line of 80 spaces (Capital letters take up more than one space, so please allow extra room). Display ads are only $1.25 per square inch. Send your order now to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

AMTRAK–VIA RAIL CANADA–EURAILPASS–OCEAN LINER CRUISES–RAIL TOURS–RAIL EXCURSIONS–CHARTER RAIL CARS. Arrangements by phone or appointment–use your credit card–tickets mailed promptly. A fully appointed travel agency with masters of ship and rail travel. GREAT WESTERN TOURS, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, 639 Market Street, San Francisco CA 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long 37¢ stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

GISELLE'S TRAVEL CORP at 1215 4th St. Sacramento CA 95814, Phone: (916) 446-1211 offers rail tickets on AMTRAK–VIA (CANADA)–EURAILPASS along with tours and accommodations in cities to which you are traveling. Let Giselle's help you take your next memorable rail trip.

Next in The International Railway Traveler: Passenger trains of the Holy Land; romance aboard the crack international overnight express "Tolstoy" between Helsinki, Finland, and Moscow; Australian National's new long-distance train, "The Alice," and much more! Come ride the railways of the world! Bimonthly subscription $15. Sample copy $2.50. Write IRT, Dept. O, P. O. Box 35067, Louisville, KY 40232. (502) 456-1028. Subscribe today!

RAIL TOURS: England, France, Spain, Canada. Summer 1984. Small groups. Write: Rail/Road Tours, Hyde Park Travel Bureau, P.O. Box 24, Hyde Park, MA 02136.

STAMFORD CT Aug 10-11 1984. Annual convention and show of the National Association of Timetable Collectors. Friday Aug 10: open to NAOTC members and registered dealers ONLY, Saturday Aug 11 open to the public from 9am to 3pm. Over 60 tables available to NAOTC Members and Railroad paper dealers ONLY. Complete details from Max Brunswick, Chairman, 155 West Rock Avenue, New Haven CT 06515. The location will be the modern Marriott Hotel, next to Amtrak/Metro North rail station in Stamford. Plan to attend America's largest paper-only show. Saturday admission $2 per person. The NAOTC Annual Convention is held in the Northeast only once every three years. Don't wait till 1987 to see this outstanding sale of rail, trolley, bus, air timetables, Employee Timetables, Guides, Postcards and all transportation paper.

SEVENTH GREAT PACIFIC COAST RAILROADIANA COLLECTOR'S SHOW and Sale, Saturday, May 12, 1984. Capitol Plaza Holiday Inn, 300 J St, Sacramento CA (near State Railroad Museum). Hours 10am to 4pm. Seller tables $25 each. Admission $1.50. Contact Roy Gabriel, National Association of Timetable Collectors, Box 981, Sacramento CA 95805, phone 916-485-2800.

TRANSPORT 2000 Canada's Annual Meeting will be held at the Oak Room, Toronto Union Station, on March 31st, 1984. Speaker will be Canada's Minister of Transport, Lloyd Axworthy. Please plan to attend. Information: Transport 2000, P.O. Box 858, Ottawa, Ont., K1P 5P9. Telephone 613-235-2865.

Oklahoma shouldn't be required to pay for a train when N. Mex., Colo., Ariz., Nev., Ida., Utah & Oreg....all with less population...have two federally funded trains, each. The brow-beating Oklahoma has taken from Amtrak provides further proof that the 403-b program amounts to nothing more than blackmail and extortion to make certain that the rest of the nation has to pay for the services the Northeast Corridor receives, abundantly, and for free. 403-b should be abolished.

THE WINNIPEG LIMITED–you read about it in RTN, now get a copy of the Dakota Rail proposal for yourself! Send 50¢ and a business-size SASE to: DAKOTA RAIL PASSENGERS ASSN., P.O. Box 91, Grand Forks, ND 58201. Help return international service to the U.S. and Canadian Midwest!

TO AMTRAK'S MANAGING BOARD OF DIRECTORS: This pertains to the case of Prouty v. NRPC, reported at 572 F.Supp. 200 (D.D.C. 1983). I hereby respectfully petition the Amtrak board of directors to publicly state what the reasons are that their attorneys concealed from the United States District Court the fact that (1) sec. 804 of the Rail Passenger Service Act of 1970, Pub. L. 91-518, 84 Stat. 1340 (1970), and 31 U.S.C. 9101(2), the GCC law, expressly designate Amtrak a "mixed-ownership GOVERNMENT corporation"; and (2) Amtrak constitutes an "Executive agency" as defined in 5 U.S.C. 105 because it is declared to be a "Government corporation" by statute. Alfred E. Ehm, 170 Carousel Dr., San Antonio, Texas.

Boston & Maine, Frisco, Pennsylvania and New York Susquehanna & Western uniform button blazer sets. Two large, six small, $5.95 or all four sets $20.95. Joseph Lajoie, P. O. Box 3, Methuen, Mass. 01844.

"THE SHEER BEAUTY OF THE PHOTOS DOMINATES THE BOOK....such dazzling color when there were so few color photos taken at the time....the general comprehensiveness of the superb photography." Laurence Veysey, on Vol. I of NORTHERN CALIFORNIA RAILROADS: The Silver Age 1945-1960. 224 pp, hardcover, 48 full color, 160 b&w, area maps, historical text. $32 at bookstores or from Sundance Publications, 250 Broadway, Denver 80203

ONE OF THE WORLD'S last great train rides–the Kyle of Lochalsh. England and Scotland by rail. Sightseeing. Historic hotels. All meals (except London). Contact Herb Rowan, Giselle's Travel, Inc., 5667 Freeport Blvd., Sacramento CA 95822; phone: (916) 421-6616.

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CARS & CONSISTS

*CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, train 58, New Orleans Mar 7: engines 326, 255; cars 1255, 1248, 2433 "Pacific Heights", 2435 "Pacific Meadow", 25068, 25109, 4621, 28022, 28012, 4014, dome 9400, 4628, 4634, 4624, dome 9411, 4635. (Over 400 psgrs, leaving Mardi Gras.)

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 2, Los Angeles Mar 9: engines SP 8549, Atk 712 & 708; cars 1174, 39900, 31026, 32026, 38015, 34041, 34065, 34049, 39970, 32016, dome 9810 "Silver Club" (deadheading to new home in Little Rock AR), SP 293 coach buffer car, SP 291 lounge, SP 141 "Oakland" office car. (Engine 8549 and last 3 cars to Phoenix to entertain freight shippers; small crew and a few psgrs riding in SP 141.)

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, Auburn WA Mar 10: engines 248, 232; cars 1268, 1134, 39923, 31000, 34079, 34000, 33004, 38001, 32069, 32061. One STARLIGHT consist seen recently in Washington had both named Superliner sleepers, 32003 "Edward L. Ullman" and 32009 "George M. Pullman" in it.

*New England States Limited, Mass. Bay RR Enthusiasts excursion train Boston-New London, Palmer-Brattleboro-Worcester-Boston Feb 25: (Atk equipment) engines 209, 342; cars 21241, 21036, 21227, 21002, 20047 Amcafe, 21215, 21237, 21250, 21132, 21206, 21164, 20034 Amcafe, 21218, 21029, 21050, 21238. Train ran in 2 sections Boston-New London due to the 947-ft interchange track at New London (track 6)..Both sections joined in CV yard at New London for remainder of trip.

*MONTREALER, train 61, Trenton Feb 13: engine 927; cars 1260, 2893, 2052, 28301, 4723, 4605, 4604, 4613, 2924 "Pacific Patrol". (Train 7 hours late; apparently this was a makeup train from Springfield after the derailment of train 61 of Feb 12 near Brattleboro—see RTN 286, page 18.)

AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

JANUARY 1984 DATA

(First column is no. of riders; second is % change from 1983.)

Here are the Amtrak ridership figures for Jan 1984. See RTN 285 for the Dec 1983 data.

With this reporting month, Amtrak has made some major changes in their reporting format. Note that the Northeast Corridor is now divided into five categories, instead of the previous seven (see RTN 285 for comparison). Amtrak said that the NE Corridor Conventional category includes local NEC riders on the Washington-Montreal, New York-Savannah, Boston-Newport News, New York-New Orleans, and New York-Cincinnati-Chicago routes. No longer listed separately are the New England Metroliners (which are due to be discontinued Apr 28), and the New York-Harrisburg route.

NORTHEAST CORRIDOR		
METROLINERS	94,736	23.9
NE CORRIDOR CONVENTIONAL	458,740	4.0
NEW HAVEN-SPRINGFIELD	19,575	25.4
NEW YORK-PHILADELPHIA	200,910	11.1
PHILADELPHIA-HARRISBURG	64,077	-6.7
TOTAL NE CORRIDOR	848,038	7.0
SHORT DISTANCE		
NEW YORK-ALBANY-NIAGARA FALLS	65,898	17.2
CHICAGO-ST. LOUIS	19,801	8.5
CHICAGO-MILWAUKEE	9,967	-1.0
CHICAGO-DETROIT-TOLEDO	25,542	-1.4
CHICAGO-CARBONDALE	11,062	-3.0
CHICAGO-QUINCY	5,531	11.2
LOS ANGELES-SAN DIEGO	81,704	5.6
SEATTLE-PORTLAND	5,588	68.0
WASHINGTON-MARTINSBURG	12,319	-31.2
OAKLAND-BAKERSFIELD	14,671	23.5
NEW YORK-MONTREAL	5,141	-12.6
CHICAGO-PT. HURON-(TORONTO)	7,065	-8.2
MINNEAPOLIS-DULUTH	2,342	51.4
CHICAGO-VALPARAISO	19,428	-7.7
CHICAGO-INDIANAPOLIS	3,563	36.7
CHICAGO-KANSAS CITY	7,639	18.1
PITTSBURGH-PHILADELPHIA-NYC	8,982	29.1
LOS ANGELES-SACRAMENTO	--	-100.0
MIAMI-TAMPA	3,570	-3.3
TOTAL SHORT DISTANCE	309,813	4.0
LONG DISTANCE		
WASHINGTON-MONTREAL	9,495	19.3
NEW YORK-FLORIDA	48,611	16.9
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/WASHINGTON	19,248	30.5
CHICAGO-CIN-WAS-NEW YORK	4,480	9.6
CHICAGO-SEATTLE/PORTLAND	30,723	20.4
CHICAGO-OAKLAND/L.A./SEATTLE	53,765	35.3
CHICAGO-LOS ANGELES	15,633	14.3
CHICAGO-NEW ORLEANS	13,245	11.2
CHI/NEW ORLEANS-LOS ANGELES	11,780	41.3
LOS ANGELES-SEATTLE	33,824	30.7
CHICAGO-NEW YORK/BOSTON	25,339	13.3
BOSTON-NEWPORT NEWS	5,635	2.4
NEW YORK-SAVANNAH	8,835	-0.3
NEW YORK-NEW ORLEANS	18,326	31.2
AUTO TRAIN (LORTON-SANFORD)	4,567	0.0
TOTAL LONG DISTANCE	303,506	24.3
SPECIAL TRAINS	4,399	-2.7
SYSTEM TOTAL	1,465,756	9.5

In the long distance category, for reporting purposes, all ridership on the Chicago-Oakland, Chicago-Salt Lake City-Seattle and Chicago-Salt Lake City-Los Angeles trains are combined. That is, trains 5, 25 and 35 are combined. Likewise, Chicago-New Orleans-Los Angeles route includes passengers traveling on Chicago-San Antonio-Los Angeles service and those traveling on the New Orleans-San Antonio-Los Angeles service; the SUNSET LIMITED and EAGLE have had their ridership combined. For the Washington-Montreal route, Washington-Springfield local riders are reported in the NE Corridor. Conventional category.

Overall ridership was up 9.5 per cent in January, compared to Jan 1983. Long distance trains made the best showing, with a 24.3% increase, no doubt the result of the continuing All Aboard America Fares.

RTN has made an attempt to estimate ticket revenue for each major category, using data for Aug 1983 (published in RTN 277) and extrapolating to the Jan 1984 figures. The assumption is made that the average ticket price does not vary from August to January.

We estimated that the NEC took in $13,453,900 in Jan, or 35.9% of Amtrak's total; that the short distance trains took in 13.1% or $4,892,500; that long distance accounted for $19,053,900 or 50.8% of the Amtrak total; and that special trains took in $83,000 or 0.2%. Total Amtrak ticket revenue in our estimate would be $37,483,300. This figure compare with the actual $52,412,800 taken in in Aug 1983, a busier month, ar the only one for which we have recent data.